

שׁוֹעַ

(For fuller discussion of the lexical field as a whole see the ‘Overview of SAHD entries for “Deliverance” words’ on this site)

Introduction

Grammatical Type: n. m.(?)

Occurrences: Total 2x OT, 0x Sir, 0x Qum, 0x inscr.

Text doubtful:

A.1 The whole of the verse Jb 30.24 is obscure and many emendations have been proposed in the past. However, if שׁוֹעַ is understood to denote the ‘cry’ of the poor (e.g. Dhorme 1967; Habel 1985:416), it echoes 29.12, where the verb שׁוֹעַ occurs.

A.2 Jb 36.19 is also a difficult verse, the sense of לֹא הִצָּר (or at least its grammatical connection) being particularly elusive. But the reading שׁוֹעַ is generally retained and its presence can be detected behind all the (very varied) versional renderings of the verse (see below).

Qere/Ketiv: none.

1. Root and Comparative Material

A.1 [See also שׁוֹעַ 1. Root and Comparative Material, especially on the PNs, for which the occurrences of שׁוֹעַ provide a more plausible basis for the use as an element of a PN.]

A.2 Although this noun might be derived from a biliteral by-form of the verb שׁוֹעַ ‘to save’, it could equally be cognate with שׁוֹעַ piel ‘to cry out for help’. BDB (447; 1002) lists it under both roots to indicate uncertainty on the matter, but expresses preference for the second option (447), and this fits the context where it is used better.

2. Formal Characteristics

A.1 Probably of the qutl pattern (BL §4611’), if it is derived from the trilateral root שׁוֹעַ (see Root and Comparative Material A.2). (HAL [1340] apparently envisages qūl as the pattern, citing BL: § 452t [similarly Ges18:1335]: this would be appropriate if the root were biliteral.). Such a derivation is favoured by Wildberger for שׁוֹעַ in Is 22.5, in preference to the alternative view that it means the Sutu (as in Ezek 23.23), which would require the emendation of קר in the previous stich to קוֹעַ (807 note f, 818). If שׁוֹעַ is related to the verb שׁוֹעַ, the loss of the consonantal *waw* may be due to the preceding *u* vowel (JM: § 26b). This does not occur with the noun שׁוֹעַ ‘a cry for help’, perhaps to distinguish it from שׁוֹעַ (cf. JM: § 26c, n. 2), but more likely because there is no original *u* vowel in that word, which is of the qitlat pattern.

3. Syntagmatics

A.1 שׁוֹעַ is the subject (or perhaps object) of the verb עָרַךְ ‘to arrange’ (Jb 36.19).

A.2 שׁוֹעַ is (in MT: see further below Exegesis A.1) subject of a nominal clause with לְ + 3f(!)pl suffix and בָּ + פִּיּוּדוּ (Jb 30.24). It is less likely that it is preceded by לְהֵן ‘therefore’: this occurs mainly in Aramaic (though 2x in the book of Ruth, where it is spelt לְהֵן) and does not fit the context here.

4. Versions

a. LXX: δέομαι? (Jb 30.24); δέησις (Jb 36.19);

Minor Greek Versions [MRN]:

b. Peshitta: *prq* (Jb 30.24; 36.19);

c. Targum: צלות (Jb 30.24); בעות (36.19);

d. Vulgate: *salvo* (Jb 30.24); *magnitudo* (Jb 36.19).

A.1 Apart from LXX the Versions in both places attempt a word-by-word rendering of a *Vorlage* that was similar or identical to MT, even if the translators were (understandably) unable to produce a coherent translation of the verses as a whole which fitted well into their respective contexts. It is therefore possible to deduce with some certainty what they took פָּשַׁע to mean, though three different interpretations of it are attested.

A.2 Pesh associated פָּשַׁע with יָשַׁע , for which its rendering *prq* is often used. Targ's two equivalents, meaning 'prayer' (Job 30.24) and 'request' (Job 36.19), evidently had a word related to the verb פָּשַׁע , 'cry out', in mind. Vulg gives two different interpretations, agreeing with Pesh in Job 30.24 but offering an abstract noun meaning 'greatness' in Job 36.19. The latter will be related to Vulg's rendering of פָּשַׁע in Is 32.5 (*maior*) and implies that the Heb. consonants were read by it as פָּשַׁע here too.

B.1 LXX's renderings of both verses are (typically for the translation of Job) free and imprecise (cf. Driver and Gray 2:280 on 36.19). They seem to be improvisations based mainly on the (preceding) context and matches with words in MT are by no means certain. But it is probably significant that $\delta\epsilon\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ in Job 30.24 and $\delta\epsilon\eta\sigma\epsilon\omega\varsigma$ in 36.19 (just before $\epsilon\nu\ \alpha\nu\acute{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\kappa\eta$) occur in approximately the places where renderings of פָּשַׁע would be expected. If so LXX understood פָּשַׁע in the same way as Targ was later to do.

5. Lexical/Semantic Field(s)

A.1 [nil]

6. Exegesis

A.1 Job 30.24 belongs to Job's *apologia* (ch. 29-31) in which he presents himself as an impeccably kind and righteous man. He particularly emphasises his generosity to the poor (29.12-17; 31.13-22). The MT of 30.24 as it stands is 'unintelligible' (Driver and Gray 1:259) and does not include any word for a poor man, but there is one in the following verse. The varied emendations and interpretations proposed show that there can be no certainty here (cf. *ibid.* 2:219). But the suffix of בְּפִידוֹ needs an antecedent and there is none in the present wording of the earlier part of the verse. The best solution (better than the popular טֹבֵעַ) is to read בְּפִידוֹ , 'against an afflicted man', for the unlikely בְּפִי (so Habel:416, following Pope; cf. BHK). The fem. pl. suffix of לְהֵן can hardly be right, but in the palaeo-Hebrew script *mem* and *nun* could easily be confused. A form with a pl. suffix (לְהֵנָם) is unlikely: by itself פָּנֵי could be taken collectively, but בְּפִידוֹ shows that it means a (typical) single individual). Habel (417) follows Dhorme and more dubiously the free

translation of LXX in reading לִי, which gives the literal translation ‘when in his distress there is a cry to me’, on the basis that שׁוֹעַ here is related to שָׁוַע, as most commentators have thought. Perhaps better, and closer to MT, we propose to read לְמִשְׁוַע for the last two words and translate ‘or in his distress to the one who cries out’, understanding the verb from the first half of the verse, with a variation in the preposition used after it. MT could have arisen on this view from a mistake in the word-division, leading to the change of לָּ to the more regular לָהֶם, followed by the confusion of *mem* and *nun* posited above. The correctness of one of these solutions receives some support from 29.12, where עָנִי and מִשְׁוַע occur adjacent to one another.

A.2 In his third and fourth speeches (36.1 - 37.26) Elihu turns from argument to a direct address to Job, in which rebuke and instruction are combined. In 36.17-23 he warns Job that his arrogance may be the ruin of him. In this context a reference to his ‘cry’ (שׁוֹעַ) in 36.19 fits well, because Elihu has already specifically said that God does not answer the prayers of the arrogant (35.12-13). In parallel he speaks here of מְאֻמְצֵי-כַח, ‘all the powers of strength’, which might be Job’s pretended ability to argue with God as an equal, as being equally futile. The words לֹא בְצָר, ‘not in distress’, remain puzzling: they apparently represent the expected effect of בְּעָרְךָ; but since the meaning (or even the reading) of that word is far from certain it is impossible to explain exactly how לֹא בְצָר might express ‘removal from distress’. In fact Driver and Gray (2:279) reasonably argue that ‘לא בצר is not the same as בלא צר (8.11; 30.28), but can only mean *without affliction* (cf. 4.21; 34.20)’; on this basis Dillmann’s rendering of the verse, which they cite (280), ‘Can he (God) bring thy cry into order (i.e. make it a cry of submission) without (the use of) affliction, and all the efforts of his strength’, has much to be said for it. But the association of שׁוֹעַ with שָׁוַע remains plausible however this problem is (or is not) solved. The alternative ‘riches’ (Driver and Gray 1:313; 2:279) or ‘opulence’ (Pope :267) has no real foundation.

7. Conclusion

A.1 In view of the problems in both verses where שׁוֹעַ occurs, certainty about its meaning is impossible. But it is most likely that it is related, as is more generally (but not universally) accepted for שׁוֹעַ in Is 22.5, to שָׁוַע, ‘cry out’. The Versions (LXX, Targ) provide some support for this view. It has, in other words, nothing to do with יְשַׁע and the ‘deliverance’ word- group more generally (pace Pesh and [in Job 30.24] Vulg).

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